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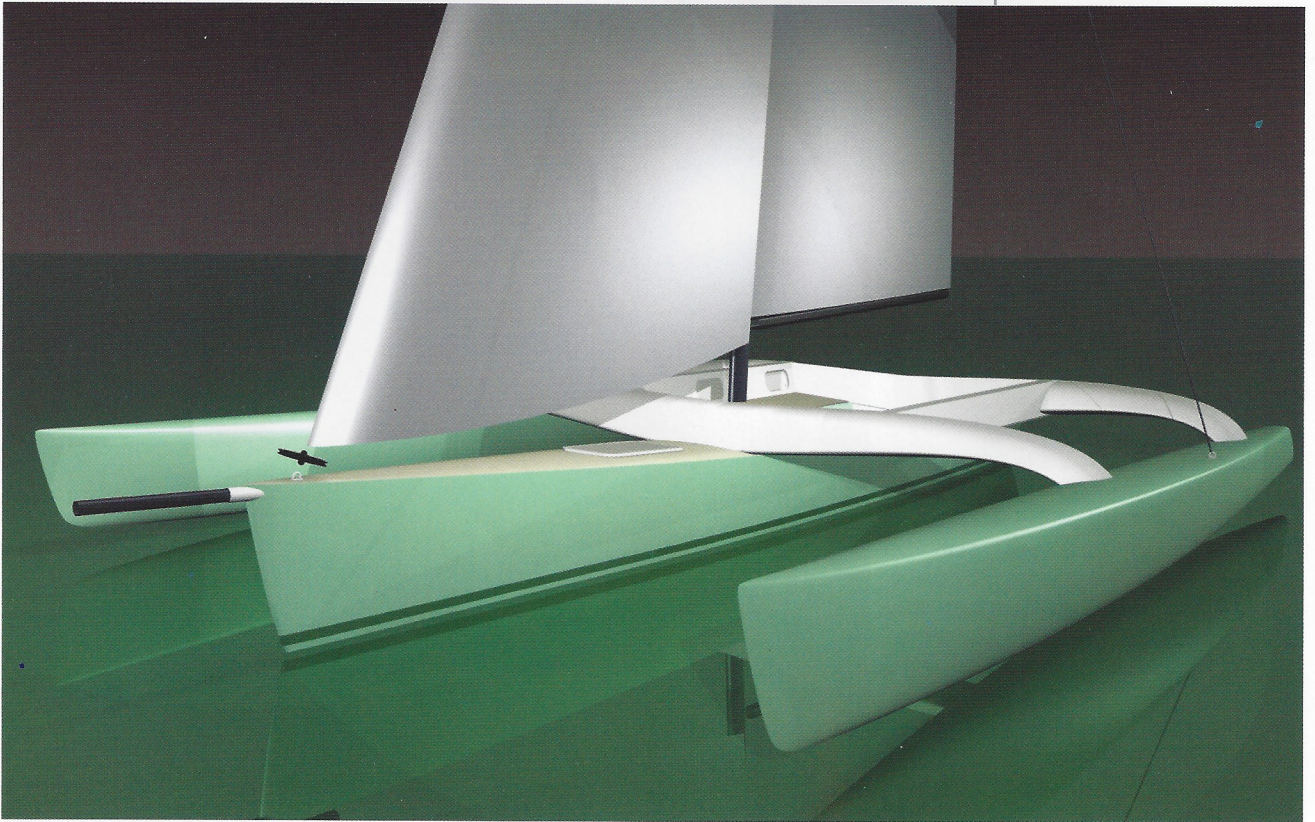
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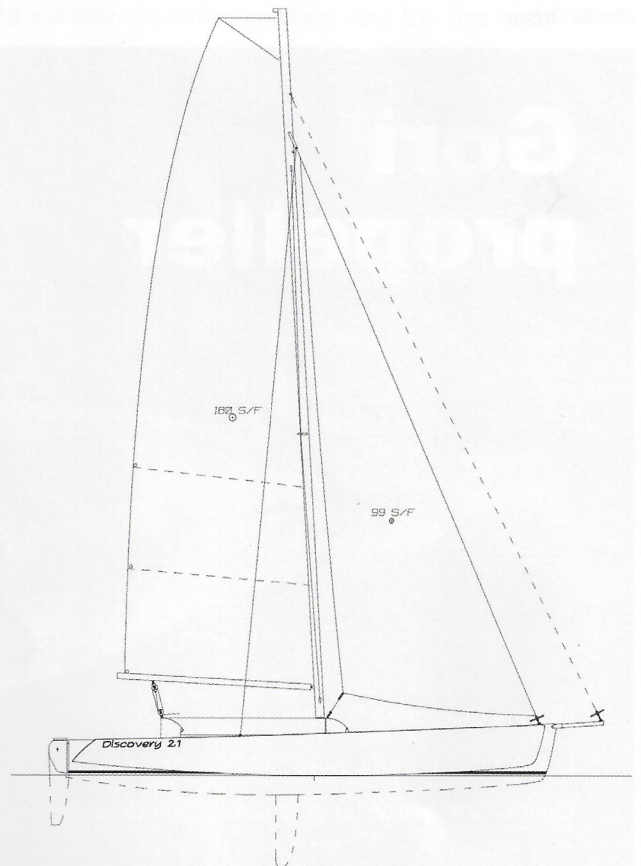
SPRING 2016





## William "Billzo" Koffler

Bill Koffler, whose company Aquidneck Custom Composites in Bristol, R.I., is one of America's premier custom yacht builders that specializes in a range of construction techniques from cold molded and composite to high tech all carbon cored laminations. *MQ* caught up with him on the phone in early April



Chris White designed  
Discovery 21





Bill along with his business partner's daughters, in the shop

**MQ:** We heard you are building a new Sparkman & Stevens launch at present. What's that boat all about?

**Bill Koffler:** It's an exotic 2.65 meter, pre-preg, carbon fiber, teak clad tender with twin drive electric Torqeedo drives. And of course the Torqeedo motors had to be disassembled and remounted in custom machined housings so they could be raised up like real outdrives...and, and, and.

**MQ:** How long have you been building boats at Aquidneck Custom Composites?

**BK:** We have been in business since 2001 and have been building boats of all types and in just about all materials ever since. I guess we may be best known for building three Chris White designed Atlantic 57 cruising catamarans some years ago. But as the high tech tender indicates, we can build just about anything that floats.

**MQ:** You also are at work on a new Chris White design based on his classic daysailing trimaran the Discovery 20, now the Discovery 21. How's that project coming?

**BK:** Yes, the new boat is based on the Discovery 20. We had a customer interested in having us build one but he had some tweaks he wanted to make to the design. As the project developed, Chris decided to redo the design to modern

standards even though it was a great boat to begin with. So, now we are building some female molds for the big parts like the hulls. The boat has folding amas so it can be easily put on a trailer. It's really a daysailer but many people have taken their Discovery 20s and

*We are building a Sparkman & Stevens launch; an exotic 2.65 meter, pre-preg, carbon fiber, teak clad tender with twin drive Torqeedo motors and we are also building a Chris White design, Discovery 21, a daysailer that can also be cruised overnight. Another boat we are excited about is a Chris White design, a souped-up version of the Atlantic 57, the Atlantic 72.*

*We are proud of the quality of our products, I don't want to build anything I am not proud of and that is not the best boat out there.*





## Foam plugs being assembled for the Discovery 21

camp cruised them. It has a proper cockpit you can sit in comfortably and has a self bailing cockpit and a coaming to lean against. It's not a beach cat where you end up sitting on the trampolines all day. We're setting up to build the 21 on order and efficiently out of molds. We have three on order and even Chris White is buying one in kit form, he likes the design so much. We're planning to show a 21 at the fall boat shows in Newport and Annapolis.

**MQ:** The other big project you have starting soon is another big cruising cat, right?

**BK:** Yes, this is a really exciting project. The boat is a Chris White design, again. It's a stretched, souped-up version of the Atlantic 57 and will be called the Atlantic 72. We are building the boat for a private client but it will be used in the charter trade, too. This is going to be a special boat. Like all Chris White designs, the 72 will be very comfortable to live aboard with lots of space and four cabins, two with king-size berths and two just shy of king-size. Each of the cabins has its own head and shower. The boat will have a professional crew who have their own cabin forward with a separate head. The boat is going to have a gourmet galley down in one hull with a big Ocean Chef stove, dishwasher, all

stainless steel countertops and a custom refrigerator, freezer and cool box.

**MQ:** How is the boat going to be built, materials and such?

**BK:** The hulls and decks are going to be built in foam and carbon. There may be some fiberglass but it looks like a full carbon build. And, yes, there is a big difference in price. Fiberglass runs about three bucks a pound and carbon is about twenty five bucks a pound. So, in a boat of this size, the difference is considerable. However the weight savings and stiffness gains are well worth the material cost. We expect the built to take 18 to 21 months.

**MQ:** What sort of rig will the boat have?

**BK:** It will have a standard sloop or cutter rig with a large mainsail, a large genoa and a small staysail. It is very like the Atlantic 57 design only larger by a lot. The boat and rig are meant to create a seakindly, fast, able and comfortable cruising boat. It will have twin 110-horsepower diesels and a genset. One of the unique aspects of the boat will be its huge solar array on the overhead that will



have something like 24 110 watt solar panels. The boat will be virtually self sufficient.

**MQ:** You are building some of the most high tech boats in the country. How did you get into boat building?

**BK:** Well I have been messing about in boats my whole life starting back when my dad and I fixed up and sailed small boats on Barnegat Bay in New Jersey. I started out in the marine business as a rigger on Cape Cod and then I went to the Landing School in Maine where I got a degree in yacht design. After that, I worked for Eric Goetz for 12 years, the last 10 of which I spent as a project manager. And then, in 2001 I went out on my own and within three months or so I had started my first custom build. Aside from the big catamarans, we have also built monohull sailboats and power boats. We built a 54-foot cold molded Jim Taylor design and a Robert Buck 53-foot yawl also in cold molded wood and composite. When we started in 2001, we were going at an incredible pace. In our first seven years we built six custom boats. And it wasn't until the Great Recession hit that

we started to slow down. Luckily, we were able to maintain the business and now we are coming back stronger than ever.

**MQ:** When you set out to build a new boat like the Atlantic 72, what is the philosophy behind the project?

**BK:** In a custom shop like ours, the most important thing we have to consider is the efficiency of the build. We try to make the process as streamlined and efficient as possible. And that takes a lot of planning and a lot of experience. Equally important is the quality of the products coming out of my shop. I don't want to build anything that I am not proud of and that is not the best boat out there.

We try to run a nice shop where people like coming to work. We never have trouble finding good crew. Basically, we try to be good managers and build crew moral. We have parties and go to events together. We try to encourage people to be creative and to work together to solve problems. I think it is pretty nice place to work. And that helps us build a superior product. ■

## An Atlantic 57 coming out of the shed

